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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-06 H-02 INR-06 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 UPW-01 AID-20
OMB-01 RSR-01 /096 W

R 031029Z JUN 72
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7585
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
COMUSMACV
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CONFIDENTIAL PHNOM PENH 3432

SUBJ: KHMER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN - THE FINAL DAY

SUMMARY: UNOFFICIAL POLLS VARIOUSLY PREDICT A LON NOL VICTORY BY 60-70 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. LATE REPORTS GIVE KEO AN, BRANDED AS THE "SIHANOUK" CANDIDATE, UNEXPECTED BUT STILL MINIMAL STRENGTH. SIRIK MATAK ADHERENTS REMAINED THRID TO ALL CANDIDATES. IN TAM DEFENDED HIMSELF AGAINST CHARGES OF HAVING TURNED A KHMER ISSARAK LEADER OVER TO SIHANOUK'S EXECUTIONERS IN THE 1960'S. HE ALSO PROMISED AN END TO CORRUPTION AND A REFERENDUM ON HIS STEWARDSHIP AFTER ELECTION. THE LON NOL FORCES ACCUSED HIM OF EMPTY PROMISES AND DEMAGOGUERY. END SUMMARY.

1. MINISTER OF HEALTH KANG KENG TOLD AN EMBASSY ONTICER THAT INFORMAL GOVERNMENT POLLS PERDICT THAT LON NOL WILL WIN 70 PERCENT OF THE VOTE; THAT IN TAM IS STRONGEST IN KOMPONG CHAM, WHERE HE WILL RECEIVE HALF THE VOTES, AND WEAKEST IS BATTAMBANG, WHERE THE MARSHAL WILL WIN 85 PERCENT. HE PREDICTED THAT THE VOTE FOR THE MARSHAL IN PHNOM PENH WILL BE BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

① 2. THE PRO-LON NOL NEWSPAPER LE REPUBLICAIN CONDUCTED A POLL OF ITS OLW AND CAME UP WITH 60 PERCENT NATIONWIDE FOR LON NOL, 25 PERCENT FOR IN TAM, A SURPRISING 8 PERCENT FOR KEO AN, "AND

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7 PERCENT ABSTENTIONS." AN EMBASSY OFFICER RETURNING FROM KOMPONG CHAM REPORTED SEEING A SOUND TRUCK PROMOTING KEO AN AND OTHER SIGNS OF STRONG SUPPORT; SUCH EVIDENCE IS ALMOST TOTALLY LACKING ELSEWHERE.

3. PROTAGONISTS OF SIRIK MATAK (NOT A CANDIDATE) SUCH AS OP KIM ANG AND TEP KHUNNAH HAVE BEEN INACTIVE. KHUNNAH AND LON NON REMAIN AT ODDS OVER THE ISSUE OF SIRIK MATAK'S FUTURE POLITICAL ROLE.

4. IN TAM APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN HURT BY LON NOL CHARGES THAT HE WAS AN ACCOMPLICE IN SIHANOUK'S EXECUTION OF A KHMER ISSARAK LEADER IN THE 1960'S. HE DEFENDED HIMSELF AGAINST THIS CHARGE IN A SPEECH ON THE GROUNDS OF THE CHENLA THEATER IN PHNOM PENH BEFORE A CROWD OF ABOUT 10,000. THE PRESS QUOTED IN TAM ON JUNE 3 AS PROMISING TO SUPPRESS CORRUPTION, MAKE CONSPICUOUS PROGRESS WITHIN SIX MONTHS, AND OPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE KHMER ROUGE. HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT FEAR A COUP D'ETAT.

5. WITH HIS USUAL LACK OF LUCIDITY, KEO AN PROMISED TO MAKE A LARGE RIVERFRONT APARTMENT BLOCK NOW INHABITED BY CIVIL SERVANTS INTO A STUDENT DORMITORY AND URGED THE UNITY OF PRO-SIHANOUK AND OTHER KHMERS.

6. A RESIDENT JOURNALIST HEARD FROM TWO UNIT COMMANDERS THAT DELIVERY OF THE MILITARY VOTE TO THE MARSHAL WILL BE ASSURED BY REQUIRING EACH SOLDIER TO RETURN TWO UNUSED KEO AN AND IN TAM BALLOTS ON THE PAYDAY FOLLOWING THE ELECTION. THERE WERE PERSISTENT REPORTS OF GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES TO COOPERATIVE NEWSPAPERS.

7. BY AND LARGE, THE INDEPENDENT VOTERS ARE PROBABLY INCLINING TO LON NOL ON THE GROUNDS THAT IN TAM COULD DO NO BETTER AND IS NOT WORTH THE TURBULENCE INHERENT IN A CHANGE.
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